



snipe are the only two shorebird species that are hunted legally in North America.

Habitats

bottomland forests

Iowa Status

uncommon; native

Iowa Range

summer: scattered throughout Iowa in suitable habitats; migrant: statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

American woodcock

Scolopax minor

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Aves
Order:	Charadriiformes
Family:	Scolopacidae

Features

An adult American woodcock is 10 to 12 inches long. Both sexes are alike in appearance. This bird has a stout, tan body with a short, thick neck. It has a long, heavy, black bill. The wings are short and rounded. The large eyes are positioned far enough back on the head that the bird can see behind itself.

Natural History

The American woodcock lives in wet thickets, moist woods, and brushy swamps. It primarily eats earthworms, but also will eat insects and spiders. When it takes to flight, it flies straight up before flying outward in an attempt to avoid tree limbs. This bird makes a unique, spiral flight pattern at dusk and dawn during the breeding season. The woodcock nests on the ground in the woods. The nest is lined with plant material. Three or four tan eggs with brown and gray markings are laid. Nesting in Iowa occurs from March through June. Fall migration peaks in October and November. Woodcock and common